

The Wickersham Episode

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any human being. I confess that I was stupefied and confounded. Here I had just brought her guilt home to her, and this was the way she behaved when she ought to feel she was driven into a corner.

"Oh!" she cried, choking with merriment, and looking prettier than ever, "you think I steal! Ah! I cannot be indignant, because it is true. I did. Come, we must set this straight. Allons! we must see about it at once!—you, Mr. Tremaine, Emily Wickersham—and Arthur." As she spoke the last name I saw that she was suddenly sobered a little. "Ah! it is best all the truth be known. In a moment I shall be ready. Meet me with the rest in the billiard room in five minutes."

I HAD no difficulty in collecting everybody. I simply flew here and there gathering them, I was so anxious about what was to happen next. We were all assembled about the billiard table,—Charley Tremaine, exceedingly anxious; Emily, much perplexed; the Hon. Arthur Carden-Carew, as expressionless as always.

The Countess almost ran into the room. She had not stopped for any elaborate preparation. Her hair was very wild,—and in fact she did not look the worse for it. "Oh!" she exclaimed, pulling up suddenly. "You are waiting. I am glad. Oh, Arthur! will you ever forgive me?"

She threw herself on the Hon. Arthur's neck in a way that I could see considerably embarrassed him.

"My dear!" he mildly remonstrated. "Oh!" she said. "You do not know you have a criminal for a wife; at least one suspected, and," she glanced at me, "suspected rightly. It is really terrible. This little lady has been very clever. Figure to yourself now. She conceived a suspicion of me. Last evening she watched me. I cautiously leave my room! I come here like the thief in the night! I take something!"

"Pon my word!" observed the Hon. Arthur.

"Keep still! Shut up, my lamb!" she said, putting her hand over his mouth. "That is right. Now I learn that Mr. Tremaine here loses a paper that is of the greatest consequence."

While speaking she led us into Mr. Wickersham's office. She conducted us to the table near the desk. She opened a drawer. Putting in her hand, she drew forth a folded blue sheet.

Charley Tremaine had this in his grasp almost before I could see what it was. "That's it!" he exclaimed joyfully.

"When I came here last night and searched," she continued, "I discovered this. I think it is strange it is there. I believe that Mr. Tremaine in thrusting it hurriedly into the drawer had by an accident pushed it under an opening in the top, where it stuck. I am delighted if I am able to make the lost found."

"I never can be grateful enough," said Charley.

"Now," she went on, with mischief in her eyes, "if you have anything to say to Miss Wickersham, I understand you may say it."

Charley was so moved that he hardly seemed to consider that we were there. "This is the reason, Emily," he blurted out, "why I did not dare tell you last night."

"It doesn't make any difference now," Emily answered, with a look that told him without asking all he wanted to know.

"You wish to learn why I was here at that small hour of the morning?" little Mrs. Carden-Carew continued. "Oh, I must confess! Oh, Arthur, I am so afraid of you! I will tell the truth! In my nation it is different. All the women smoke the cigarette. Arthur," and she glanced appealingly at him, "you do not approve. It is the only thing I have kept from you. I do it only once, twice at all, since we are married. Coming down here, my maid forgot my cigarette case. Last night the desire for a whiff comes on me. I was weak. I yielded. I know that in the billiard room or Mr. Wickersham's room are cigarettes. I come down in the darkness to get one. Here in the drawer where was the paper, I find a package." She held up a gaudily decorated box. "See! I put back what I took as I promised, without the one I smoke last night. Oh, Arthur! will you ever forgive me?" Again she threw her arms about the Hon. Arthur's neck.

"Nonsense!" he said. "I'm not so strict as all that. If you had only let me know! Now I've not the least objection to one occasionally when we are alone."

"You are an angel!" she exclaimed, hugging him. "Still I will not. This has been a lesson to me. When we are in Washington, where we go to join the Embassy, I never touch one again, never, never!"

SO, with Charley and Emily made happy, with the future peace of the Carden-Carew ménage established, I believe that I may consider the Wickersham Episode another feather in my cap.

A Voyage Perilous

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land muscles in their backs and arms, and five as brave hearts as ever beat in the bodies of human beings.

To my intensest astonishment they told me that four men had been out on a point of land from which the bay is visible cutting some dead harp seals the night before. Just at the very time they were leaving for home, my pan of ice had drifted out clear of Hare Island, and one of them with his keen fisherman's eyes had seen something unusual. They at once returned to their village, saying there was a man on a pan.

All the time I had been driving along I knew there was one man on the coast who had a good spyglass. He instantly got up in the middle of tea, on hearing the news, and hurried over the cliff with his glass. Dark as it was, he saw me wave my hand every now and again toward the shore. They went down at once to try and launch a boat; but that was absolutely impossible. Miles of ice lay between them and me, and the heavy sea was hurling great blocks on the landwash, and night was already falling, and the wind blowing hard on shore.

The whole village was aroused. Messengers were despatched at once along the coast, and lookouts told off to all the favorable points. So that while I considered myself a laughingstock, bowing with my flag to those irresponsible cliffs, there were really men watching from them. One man told me that with the glass he distinctly saw me waving the shirt flag. There was little slumber that night in the villages, and even the men told me there were few dry eyes, as they thought of the impossibility of saving a man from perishing. We are not given to weeping overmuch on this shore; but

there are tears that do men honor.

Before daybreak this fine volunteer crew had been got together. Every man, woman, and child in the village was on the beach as we neared the shore. Every soul was waiting to shake hands when I landed. Even with the grip that one after another gave me, some no longer trying to keep back the tears, I did not find out that my hands were frostbitten—a fact I have not been slow to appreciate since. I must have been a weird sight as I stepped ashore, tied up in rags, stuffed out with oakum, wrapped in the bloody skins of dogs, with no hat, coat, or gloves, and only a pair of knickers.

But no time was wasted before a pot of tea was exactly where I wanted it to be, and some hot stew was locating itself where I had intended an hour before the blood of one of my remaining dogs should have gone. Rigged out in the warm garments that fishermen wear, I started with a large team as hard as I could race for the hospital; for I had learned the news had been spread that I was lost. It was soon painfully impressed upon me that I could not much enjoy the ride; for I had to be hauled like a log up the hills, my feet being so frostburnt that I could not walk. Had I guessed this before going into the house, I might have avoided much trouble.

And still there rang in my ears as I went to sleep the verse of an old hymn—they hardly ever sing it here, and it was an unconscious memory of boyhood days—which had been my constant companion on the ice:

My God, my Father, while I stray
Far from my home on life's rough way,
Oh, teach me from my heart to say,
Thy will be done!

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